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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes an open discussion between members of the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) and conference attenders following 2 days of testimony about issues in Native American education. An administrator outlined the loss of educational opportunity for Native Americans during the 1980s due to decreased federal funding, disregard of treaty rights, and bureaucratic entanglements, and outlined recommendations for tribally controlled teacher education, alternative education programs, increased funding, substance abuse prevention, and bilingual education programs. An attorney urged the Task Force and the NACIE to draft federal policy supporting tribal government control of public schools on the reservation, and outlined educational ramifications of the Supreme Court's recent refusals to support tribal sovereignty in other areas. Other topics of discussion included the need for additional programs for handicapped and gifted students; the need for teacher training in American Indian culture, substance abuse prevention, and suicide prevention; Indian identity and tribal sovereignty as resources to use in negotiations with the federal government; encouraging political involvement of community members at the local level; poverty, welfare, lack of self-esteem, and the need to pursue self-sufficiency on the reservations. The responsibilities of the Task Force were described. (SV)

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INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions
NIEA 22nd Annual Conference - San Diego, California
October 16, 1990

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"Open Discussion with NACIE and Task Force Members"

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INAR/NACIE Issue Sessions
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Summary: "Open discussion with NACIE and Task Force Members"

The open discussion with NACIE and Task Force Members was hosted by INAR Task Force Co-Chair William Demmert and NACIE Council member Robert Chiago. The following issues, concerns, and recommendations were discussed:

I. **Overview of the Issues**

- During the Reagan years, Indians witnessed the loss of teacher education programs, decreased funding for innovative ideas, almost no money for construction of facilities, reduced funding levels of entitlement programs never reached, boarding schools fighting for survival, and disregard of treaty rights. Memberships and appointments to the National Advisory Council of Indian Education were not made in a timely manner, and other appointments of Indian people to other boards were seriously delayed. From an education administrator's point of view, I believe the following occurred during the 1980s:

    o Among Indian students, dropouts, absenteeism, tardiness, and lower academic achievement have increased.

    o Drug and alcohol use has increased among Indian students because positive recreation programs and facilities on reservations are lacking.

    o There is now a 50 percent or better chance a student will come from a home that is affected by drugs and/or alcohol. This contributes to a learning environment within which it is difficult for all students to function. Many of the support programs that were available no longer exist. The loss of these programs decreased opportunities for the academic success of many of our students.

    o Funding to support single-parent students in our schools has been unavailable. Many of these students may become grandparents by age 30.

    o We have students graduating from college, but fewer of them are returning to their reservations because no jobs are available there.

    o There is an increase in the number of students attending our schools who come from homes with unemployed parents. Unemployment in the 1980s reached 80 percent on many reservations.

- As the lack of education opportunities in the 1980s are being discussed, as the problems that exist among our students are debated, as programs to meet the unique needs of Native students are developed, and as appropriations are fought for, some direction to meet these

needs must be developed. I would like to recommend that NACIE and the Task Force consider the following:

- Teacher training programs that are administered by tribal community colleges and four-year institutions in cooperation with the local education agencies should be developed and funded.

- Alternative education programs should be established to meet the employment needs of the next century. This includes the high-risk and single-parent students who make up a large percentage of the semi-skilled or non-college-trained workforce.

- A format should be developed to recognize, promote, and encourage employers and colleges to recruit our outstanding, academically successful students.

- State education departments should be encouraged to set standards that require a review process of all materials used for curriculum and instruction, and to periodically review and update library materials.

- Congress and the White House should increase funding for programs to the local education agencies that implemented programs for decreasing dropout rates, tardiness, and absenteeism.

- A process should be established for local education agencies, government leaders, and community people to address the outrageous use of drugs and alcohol among our youth. This should include positive reinforcement, encouragement, and recognition of those students who are alcohol and drug free.

- Local education agencies should be encouraged to develop bilingual education programs that will assist the limited English proficient students. The English-only school setting continues to show our students have lower test scores, lower grade point averages, lower high school graduation percentages, and lower self-esteem because public schools continue to use programs and standardized tests that are normed with mainstream Americans.

- The President and his Cabinet should fulfill their pledge to appoint Indian leaders to NACIE and other important boards in a timely manner. The direction and expertise they can provide is critical to our future.

- The President must submit a budget to Congress that includes full funding of all Indian education entitlement programs. Funding for non-entitlement programs should receive the same consideration.

- The President should be encouraged to deliver a State of Indian Affairs address to the nation similar to the one given by President Nixon. This would demonstrate to the world his recognition of, support for, and legal obligations to the first Americans.

I have real concerns for our Indian children's educational well-being in the public schools. I believe we must take our role as educators, parents, and teachers far more seriously than we now do. We are responsible for teaching our children to be tomorrow's leaders, parents, and educators. I believe we must hold our educational systems accountable for how and what they are teaching our children. I believe our government must also be held accountable for upholding its part of our treaty rights to educate our Indian children. Many non-Indian educators believe that our children or Indian families do not pay taxes and therefore they do not have to go out of their way to educate our Indian children. I believe we need to implement statewide plans to educate citizens about Indian history and Indian treaty rights. It always amazes me how ignorant people are nationwide when it comes to Indian history, culture, and our rights. Many seem to still believe we are living in the 1800s and find it hard to believe that after 200 years we still practice our religion and our ceremonies. They thought by this time that we all would have been "civilized." I'm being facetious, but my point is that we need to implement a nationwide plan to educate these people, educate our Congresspeople, educate our legislators--educate these people who make the laws.

The problems our Indian children face in the public schools are phenomenal: discrimination, misunderstanding, ignorance, low expectations, over identification for special education, remedial education programs, misplacement of our gifted children in high-risk programs, and intimidation of our Indian parents. I believe the INAR Task Force has its work cut out for it. This investigation and the testimony from Indian people must be heard and taken in all sincerity.

Society's problems with chemical substance abuse must be addressed. Prevention and treatment programs must be a top priority. The myth that this is a problem of Indian or low-income people has to be stopped. We will not overcome the numerous problems of this drug scene unless we act in full force to not tolerate and live with it in our society.

As role models of Indian children and tomorrow's leaders, are we comfortable in what we are modeling? Can we afford to say, "Do as I say and not as I do?" I think not. As parents, teachers, administrators, and lawmaking bodies, it is imperative that we take a serious look at ourselves and act accordingly. We cannot continue to deny ourselves, our families, and our children a better tomorrow. We are important, we are loved, and our children deserve a better life.

Our financial disparity in education is a real problem nationwide, as we are reminded on a daily basis. I often wonder if our country will ever overcome the national financial deficit that we face. This truly is a national tragedy.

I commend the INAR Task Force for undertaking such a task of this magnitude. For our children's future in this world, I can only offer my support for the recommendations that will come from this effort.

I'd like to paraphrase some of the statements made in the general session by Mr. John Tippeconnic. His vision was to increase academic cognitive skills to enable the Native Americans to succeed. Teachers will have high expectations for their students and use new skills and new styles in communications, math, and science. Education will become more of

a priority. And teacher performance will be improved through salary and training. But it all comes down to funding, and this year, especially this year, we're faced with the fact that the education system may be placed on 22 days furlough. Even though it is a discontinued furlough, the students will lose one month out of the school year. It may be best to implement more funding, or it may be time to exempt the education system from these cuts or figure out a way of better consolidating the funding for the educational system so that we don't have to continuously worry about shortening the school year for the students.

II. Program Recommendations from the Pueblo

The Pueblo believe that more educational programs need to be developed to meet the special and unique needs of the multihandicapped students. These programs should be designed so that these students can achieve a level whereby they can do some tasks for themselves and eventually, to the extent possible, become independent.

The Pueblo recommend that more education programs be developed to address the needs of gifted and talented students. All too often the schools are concerned with meeting only the needs of the students who require remedial services, and the gifted and talented students are left behind. We need to ensure that our gifted and talented students remain stimulated so they do not become bored with their schooling.

The Pueblo believe that our schools need to refer our gifted and talented students to the various private preparatory schools. It is the Pueblo understanding that many private schools are trying to recruit Indian gifted and talented students. The schools serving our students need to take advantage of this opportunity.

The Pueblo recommend that school districts implement student exchange programs within their school districts. This will allow the students to be exposed to the various educational processes within a school district.

In many tribes, pregnancy and alcohol and drug abuse are major problems that cause some of our students to drop out of school. The Pueblo recommend that school districts promote the concept of alternative school programs. These programs would assist our students to complete their schooling. This would also assist the Indian nations in rehabilitating our students and help them become productive citizens of our communities.

III. Native Language and Culture

- I have been threatened because I questioned what was going on in tribal government and BIA government. They have such a fear of losing their jobs that they've threatened my life. But I'm beyond that because I see the need for planning for the future education of our Indian children. Things have been lost over the decades. I was told never to speak Indian. I never learned my language. My grandparents had told my parents not to teach me because you were whipped and belittled by the people in boarding schools. I can understand my Native language, but I cannot speak it. I lost a lot of the culture. This needs to be brought

out as much as possible. We're losing ground and our schools need to implement the language from K through 12 to college. When you're seven years old, you've learned everything you're going to learn about how to talk, and that part of your brain loses that ability. It's so hard to learn another language. Maybe we need to start in preschool.

The state needs to work into their teacher training curriculum a mandatory course in Indian studies to foster a better understanding of the various tribal cultures of the Indian students. There is so much misunderstanding and lack of knowledge of the culture and traditions of the Indian students that it leads to a lack of self-esteem and low self-images of our students.

IV. **Health, Wellness, and Housing**

- Yesterday I talked about people raised on reservations having post-traumatic stress disorder and I walked downstairs and found this report put out by Arrow, Inc., that I'd like to present as part of my testimony. We need counseling for families. We need counseling skills, parenting skills, and everything else that is available for the trauma that has been caused to us as Indian people over 200 years or more.

- We talk about drugs and alcohol and the need for a treatment center right in our home town. There is so much denial out there about what is going on, but we need those facilities. We helped write the plans for a regional treatment center hoping to get one in our area, but it's going to be about 400 miles away from us. We hoped it would be no further than about 150 miles away.

We did an estimate of how many people were actually working in the field of sobriety on our reservation of 18,000 people. There were only eight places people with problems could go and approximately 20 people working in that field. With 83 to 90 percent unemployment in the wintertime and the alcohol consumption rate as high as it is, we need more funding and we need more certified people. We talk about suicide, and I helped bury three kids this year from my high school. There are car accidents that don't need to happen and there are beatings that people die from.

I heard something today that made me realize that there is still abuse occurring in some of our schools because our teachers don't know how to treat the students. The school I'm representing is working on having everybody look at their own behaviors. Out of 87 staff members, 30 went through six days of intensive training in alcoholism, and slowly but surely are coming around. You have to have a person at the top of the ladder who understands alcoholism and trauma and who doesn't allow these behaviors to get out of line. The system is already in place where you can use a chain of command; however, that chain of command has been abused many times.

I'm proud of our school and it's coming around. Of the 300 high school students that we got the first month in September, approximately 90 percent are still there, and that is great. We put some limits on the people that could come to our school. If they dropped out of another school because of behavior problems, they couldn't come until the next semester, they had to change their behavior, and they had to receive counseling.

We had to fight for our counselors. We had to turn away people who did not know about alcoholism, and yet they had a counseling degree. The system was not adequate at the time; we have to add to it and make sure these people know what they're talking about.

- We need to look at the Indian housing programs and make some recommendations to stop the cluster home concept. They have created pockets of poverty in our communities--Indian ghettos--that are affecting the education of our children. Children coming from poor communities and living in the cluster homes are often the ones late for school and not doing well.

- I urge the Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education to draft and support federal policy that supports Indian tribal governmental control--direct tribal regulatory authority--over state public schools on reservations and in Indian country. Most Indian students attend state public schools, and many of these are located on reservations and in other parts of Indian country. Right now, federal law does not recognize or support direct tribal control or regulatory authority over those schools. Some of the federal laws have come close; they've set up funding mechanisms, parent committees, and administrative processes in an attempt to create a measure of Indian and tribal control over these schools. I think the next logical step for groups like yours--task forces and advisory councils--is to recommend giving tribes direct authority in this area.

As an attorney, let me offer another reason why not having this issue of tribal authority settled as a matter of law is a very scary thought right now. Whenever we have Indian tribes that are increasingly trying to exercise their authority in an area like education, we're going to have to have a test case, a lawsuit, or litigation. Someone's going to say the tribes can't have any authority over the state schools on their reservations. I would like to think that the tribes would win that suit against the states and be granted legal authority because those states are operating within the territory of Indian tribes when they are on reservations. I would like to think the tribes would win, but I thought that about a lot of other cases such as ousting state taxation, using peyote, criminal jurisdiction over non-member Indians, and zoning on their reservations. But because of the Supreme Court we've got now, tribes cannot do those things.

The Supreme Court has refused to confirm tribal rights in those new areas. We can't count on the Supreme Court, but we can count on tribal rights if it's in federal law before the test case comes about. Once tribal rights are confirmed in legislation, the states and the Supreme Court can't take them away. Groups such as the Task Force and NACIE have the power to diminish or eliminate the risk that Indian tribes face in the untested area of education. Tribal authority and tribal rights in the area of education should be spelled out or at least confirmed to exist as a matter of federal law. If necessary, maybe the law should recognize that the tribes have some kind of concurrent authority over the state schools on the reservations.

- We need to address the issue of identity because it has a lot of potential in it. The identity I'm talking about is our identity as an Indian people. What is an Indian? In the research that I've done, there are three areas we look at. (1) Indian people as mentioned in treaties are identified as people other than Americans. Also, our tribes are identified as having

sovereign jurisdiction to make their own laws, a potential that no one has looked into. (2) The Indian that we all talk about at these national conventions and that we utilize the most is our individual American Indian identity. This Indian identity has been reinforced through federal laws. (3) Our third identity is that we are all Americans.

I think today we are dealing primarily through our identities as Americans and American Indians, and we're not looking at that identity of ourselves as tribal members, that identity that has the sovereign jurisdiction. When you look at that identity, I think it has the most potential. It's a resource that no one is looking at or making use of. It's a resource that we can use to negotiate with the federal government on a government-to-government basis. As an individual American Indian I can't negotiate with the federal government on a government-to-government basis. I have to go through my American government channel. If we learn to control and manage this identity, I think we can do a lot of things. The base of this identity is spirituality. I think my Indian identity has been given to me and the base of that identity is being a spiritualistic person, believing in the concept of the Great Spirit. You put your total faith that the Great Spirit is going to take care of you no matter what happens. These identities need to be looked at.

Today I read in one of the business papers that $2.5 billion are appropriated for American Indian people, and of the $2.5 billion, only 9 percent comes to the local levels. That means 91 percent is being eaten up by bureaucracy or by monitoring what we're doing with our little 9 percent. I think if we can manage and control these areas, there are a lot of resources out there that we could begin to benefit from. I think tribes that have a sovereign identity can really do something in this area.

On a reservation we've got welfare programs and social programs coming to us and we have to almost beg for them. However, our tribal identity gives us that right, and I think our tribal governments have to go after this area.

V. Sovereignty and Self-Determination

I am with a state that is not a reservation state and we do not have reservation schools. In some cases, over 50 percent of the students in public schools are Indian. For instance, the town where our tribe has its offices is 58 percent American Indian. However, we don't have an Indian on the school board and we don't have an Indian teacher. They won't hire Indian teachers because of some lame excuse. Perhaps they just don't want to hire Indians.

Tribal governments are becoming aware of the government-to-government relationship they have with the federal and state governments and are practicing sovereignty to a greater degree. This seems to create more tension with the non-Indian school boards and the white teachers who fail or refuse to understand the multicultural background and environment of the Indian students. This causes the students to think of themselves as second-class citizens.

We have an Indian school board at one Indian school in our area that is made up of seven different tribes in that agency. These seven different tribes form the school board and they help the staff of the school. However, we're having problems with the difference between

the superintendent and the education director. The superintendent takes his directives from the seven tribes on the school board. He is an Indian selected by the school board to serve as the superintendent, and he is trying to follow the tribal governments' recommendations. The area education director, who is a non-Indian, is his boss. He states that the superintendent must go by the BIA policy. He does this with no regard for what might be best for the kids who are attending this Indian school.

VI. Influencing the System

- I support those who talk about our responsibility to support our own education system. We need to look at some ways in our local communities and reservations that we can be responsible for our own education systems.

- I would like the Task Force to encourage the political involvement of local people by registering to vote and going out and voting for their local school boards, councils, county commissioners, governors, and representatives. We often have quite a good turn out for tribal council elections but education often takes a back seat in tribal campaigns. They talk about it a lot, but after the councils are elected, very little is done. When we have our school board elections, the percentage of turnout is very, very low and consequently we have a small group of people who are controlling the public schools in our communities. We need to become more politically active in that capacity. This is something we can easily do ourselves.

- We have always gone to the big colleges for research, and it has been suggested that we start going to our local community colleges on Indian nations. I feel that another important step would be to localize research centers to communities. We've got 19 Pueblos out there, and we need to conduct research not away from the Pueblos, but within the Pueblos. We can use that research to effectively utilize the resources that we have, our teachers and community leaders, and implement what we have learned from the research.

I would like to see total control of the budget process within local school districts, instead of having it split up. In Laguna, facilities are with one agency and the school is with another. Both are within Laguna, but the budget is still split. I think we need total control as far as the budget is concerned.

Yesterday, at the general assembly, we heard the goals and objectives of the U.S. Office of Indian Education. They are the same goals that we've heard over and over and over, but it seems like now someone is trying to do something about it. We need to implement programs to meet these goals and objectives and some are already out there doing it in local school districts. What you probably need to do is find out where they are. We've told you time and time again that we have these systems in place, but no one ever comes out and says, "You're doing a good job. We're going to share this with other schools." I think once in a great while at some of these conferences those ideas are shared.

VII. **White House Conference**

- We need the White House Conference. I was a young parent when they first brought it out, and now I'm a grandpa. It's a long time between being a young parent when they first spoke of this and now.

- This White House Conference needs to come. We need to be out in the middle and show the world our needs. Somebody talked about Tiajuana and how bad it was down there. I think if you come to the reservation you'll see the same thing.

VIII. **Welfare, the Work Ethic, and Self-Sufficiency**

- I'm an administrator of the largest grant school in the United States. We are located on the reservation and are federally funded. We were one of the first schools to go contract 20 years ago. We're located in the north central part of the United States in South Dakota. I just wanted to open up a can of worms. We live with unemployment, poverty, alcoholism, and vandalism, and the problems are the same almost everywhere. The problem we have is welfare abuse. We have people now that are third generation welfare recipients and consequently we're losing the work ethic. When I was in Russia, there was no welfare. In Russia, everybody works; it's in their constitution. They have a right to a job, so everybody works. If you don't work, you don't get any money.

  In Russia, they have two economies, the old state economy we see so much on the TV and the new economy, the free market economy. What we see on the TV is only half of the picture. What the media is presenting up here in the States is really being unfair to the Russians. They show us the long lines and tell us that the Russians are starving to death. That is not true. The long lines in the state stores are caused by people hoarding. You can buy anything you want in Russia from hose in the free market economy, but the prices are sky high. It is unfair what capitalism has introduced to Russia.

  What is going to happen in Russia has already happened to us here in the States--the rich are going to get richer, and the poor are going to stay poor. Here in the United States, 1 percent of the people own half of the money, and they got their wealth through unfair competition. Everybody knows about the buyouts, takeovers, insider trading, mergers, Mike Milken, and Ivan Boesky's unfair competition. The "American Dream" is nothing more than a sales gimmick based on the profit motive.
  In Congress, right outside the Senate chambers is a place they call "Gucci Gully" where they go in and negotiate the budget. The lobbyists are in Gucci Gully and they wait there like dogs waiting for a bone. As soon as the legislators come out, they jump on them.
  Legislators are being run by one percent of the people in this country. Big money buys the lobbyists and the lobbyists influence Congress.

  We have a big budget deficit everybody wants to get rich. So what happens? Reaganomics comes in and says, "Well, let's give the money to the rich, and the rich people will create jobs, and it will trickle down to the poor." Well, that might work in the cities, but it won't work on the reservations, the ranches, or the farms.

We're facing the Savings and Loan bailout, which is $500 billion, and the national debt here in the United States is $4.2 trillion. I can't even imagine how much money that is.

Indians rely on federal dollars to run education. We ask Congress for more money but they don't have the money. And right now, in these budget cutting times, it's going to get worse. I can see what's happening--the head of the BIA is going into Gucci Gully. They're fighting over the bones of the federal budget. The BIA budget is being cut, so the people are fighting over what they can get. So what does this rich society do, this moral society? They say, "Let's help those poor people down there. Let's give them welfare." So they give us welfare. But welfare has destroyed our self-esteem and self-sufficiency, and unemployment has created poverty.

The poverty situation is leading to alcoholism. On the reservation, the alcoholism rate is 100 percent. Even if you don't drink, someone in your family does, and therefore everybody on the reservation is affected by alcohol.

There is no self-esteem, no self-sufficiency, and no employed role models. For three generations the kids have nobody to see going to work every morning, and yet we're supposed to educate these children and get them out in the workforce. Why? There's no work. Why should I go work?

We need to get rid of the welfare system on the reservation. My wife works at social services, and they have a Tribal Work Experience Program (TWEP), and they give $50 added incentive to go to work. Well, why should they go to work? I've had those employees come work for me, and they come up and quit. When I asked them why, they explain that they make more money on welfare. When they work they have to pay for a babysitter and buy gas. Why work?

We have to get rid of the welfare. One percent of the people in this country control welfare. They control the lobbyists. They control the Congress. We need to ask Congress if we can take that welfare money and use it for wages. We need to put our people back to work.

I heard Greenspan talking on the TV the other day and he said there is a certain percentage of unemployment that we must maintain. I couldn't believe he said that. If we could use this welfare as wages, we could get more responsible employees. We need help in the schools systems. We need bus monitors, hall monitors, kitchen help, and custodial help. We use TWEP and maybe they come once or twice a month. Why couldn't it be like Russia? If you don't work, you don't get any welfare. In Russia, they create jobs for everybody. They may be menial jobs, but at least they're working. They have work ethic, and they're proud of what they are doing. That's what we need to do for our people.

We have this whole welfare mentality that exists on the reservation, so now even tribal governments are welfare oriented. Consequently tribal governments are corrupt because of this welfare mentality. They play dirty politics just to keep themselves in office. This is all based on the welfare mentality of the people that has permeated the whole structure of the reservation system.

Up north we had what they call the "give away" system. The society elected to run the camp that year went throughout the camp, and if they put a staff in front of your tepee, and sang a taopenaji (phonetic), the doorway song, an honor song, you donated to the society. They didn't put that staff up in front of a poor person, they did that only in front of those who could afford something. They got all of those gifts together and gave them to the poor, the sick, the crippled, and the unfortunate.

That was a system of taxes. We should take that same sort of concept and update it. Tribal governments need to start taxing the people, the government, and the businesses. We need to become self-sufficient. I think that is one of the big things that white America has against Indians. The stereotype is that we don't pay taxes. We do, but it's through a cultural approach. It's a little bit different, and it's not done by written law--it's done through custom. We could just update these customs into a more modern context.

IX. Responsibilities of the Task Force

- The Task Force is interested in identifying some of the good projects that exist, including the Santa Fe Indian School, the Mt. Edgecumbe School in Alaska, and the St. Regis Project. There are other programs out there that have evidence of effectiveness. We need to use these as examples of the kinds of things that need to be done. The Task Force intends to develop a set of recommendations that will be consistent with the hearings and the research information provided, all of which we hope or expect to be reinforced by the commissioned papers that are being written.

  As you may or may not know, this report was commissioned by the Secretary of Education, Lauro Cavazos, and he will be looking at the recommendations that we make as a Task Force and decide what to follow and what not to follow. Assuming they agree, I think that Task Force members and Indian educators from across the nation can do much to help some of those recommendations become either law or administrative practice if we get behind them at the appropriate time.

  One of the most recent examples of successful effort or activity from reports have been Title IV, the Indian Education Act of 1972, as amended, now called Title V. This came from a 1971 report called Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge, from the Havighurst Report which was published at about the same time, and then later, from the information that was pulled together for the Indian Self-Determination Act. I'm hopeful that 20 years later this report will have an impact similar to Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge. But again, unless the people get behind it, it's not going to happen. We certainly got behind the other one; it was a major effort across the country to ensure that the legislation was drafted and the law was passed and then finally funded.

- As a tribal leader, I am responsible for the well-being of my people, whether it is in education, health, or any other area. I think that the Task Force has the same responsibility I do, because you were created to look into the problems and concerns of Indian people throughout the nation as expressed in the hearings you held. I don't know how long these hearing have been held, but I know that the problems expressed in Phoenix were the same I

heard four, five, ten years ago. The same problems were expressed. I am here today to encourage you, and more than encourage you, to ask or plead to this committee, that you present whatever information you gather and the data that is developed to the proper people--to those people that are going to respond in a positive manner. Too many times in the past we've been told that they are going to address our problems. We keep hearing all these things and yet the promises go unanswered.

I, as a tribal leader, will support whatever efforts that you put in front of the Washington people when it comes to that point, if it is going to benefit the Indian tribes. I don't want to be listening to the same things ten years from now because I think that if we fail this time to make any changes, then we fail in our responsibility to see to the well-being of our people.

I think that you, as the committee, have the responsibility to make the testimony and recommendations a reality for the Indian people. If this Task Force doesn't do that, then this study is going to be shelved and nothing is going to be done. You hold the destiny of our children in your hands.